

Press Release  
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#### DHHCAN CAPTION 2006 INFORMATION AND ACTION GUIDE

- 100% Captioning of TV Programs? Not Exactly.
- Special Requirements for News Programs
- Sending a Complaint
- Visual Presentation of Emergency Information

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network has prepared this Guide to give you information about what must be captioned on January 1, 2006, when the requirements for captioning of many television programs increase. We've also included information about how you can send a complaint about programs that are not captioned as required, or have problems with the captioning.

#### 100% Captioning of TV Programs? Not Exactly.

On January 1, 2006, 100% of NEW programs, both analog and digital, must be closed captioned. But that doesn't mean that you will be able to change from channel to channel and see everything on your television with captions.

These programs do not require 100% closed captioning:

1. English or Spanish language programs first shown before January 1, 1998, or for digital captions, before July 1, 2002: only 30% must be captioned.
2. New Spanish language programs: only 50% must be captioned.

These programs are not required to be closed captioned at all:

1. Most programs shown from 2 am to 6 am local time.
2. Locally-produced and distributed non-news programs with no repeat value, such as parades and school sports events.
3. Commercials of five minutes or less.
4. Instructional programs produced locally by public TV stations for use in grades K-12 or postsecondary schools
5. Programs in languages other than Spanish and English
6. Programs shown on new networks for the first four years of the network's operations
7. Public service announcements and promotional ads of less than 10 minutes
8. Programs by providers with an annual gross revenue under \$3 million (but these programmers must still "pass through" the captions of any programs that already have them)

#### Special Requirements for News Programs

TV news programs also must provide 100% closed captioning as of January 1, 2006.

ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC and their affiliates must realtime caption their news in the "top 25" television markets. Realtime captioning should give you captions for everything that is being spoken.

The country's top 25 markets are:

AZ: Phoenix  
CA: Los Angeles, San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose,  
Sacramento/Stockton/Modesto, San Diego  
CO: Denver  
DC: Washington, DC  
FL: Tampa/St. Petersburg/Sarasota, Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando/Daytona  
Beach/Melbourne  
GA: Atlanta  
IL Chicago  
MD: Baltimore  
MA: Boston  
MI: Detroit  
MO: St. Louis  
MN: Minneapolis/St. Paul  
NY: New York City  
OH: Cleveland  
OR: Portland  
PA: Pittsburgh, Philadelphia  
TX: Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston  
WA: Seattle

Non-broadcast networks (such as cable) which serve at least 50% of households subscribing to video program services must also realtime caption their news.

All other news programs are allowed to caption with electronic newsroom technique (ENT). This captioning is pre-scripted, which causes gaps when the program has live news updates, breaking news, ad libs, live interviews, sports and weather updates, and field reports.

#### Sending a Complaint

##### 1. Put it in Writing

The Federal Communications Commission oversees and enforces the regulations for TV closed captioning. You must send a complaint by writing to your TV "distributor".

##### 2. Your Distributor: Who to Write, Where to Send the Complaint

- If you use an antenna to receive your TV signal, write to General Manager of the TV station that the program came from. You can find the address of the station in your telephone book.

- If you use cable or satellite TV service, write to the General Manager of the cable or satellite company. The address should be on your cable or satellite bill.

##### 3. What to Put in the Complaint

Give as much detail as you can. This will help identify what needs to be fixed. Here are some things to include:

- Start the letter with, "This letter is sent in regard to FCC rules at 47 CFR Part 79.1"

- Give your full address, daytime phone or TTY number, email address.

- List the TV shows that were not captioned or had a captioning problem, with the TV channel name and number. Also include the date and time of the shows.

Examples:

- CSI had no captioning on WBX 4 on January 4, 2006 from 9-10 pm.
- American Idol on WNYC 12 lost captions from 8:45 to 9 pm on January 6, 2006.
- Desperate Housewives on WKSX 9 captions disappeared during the first advertisement at 9:10 pm.
- CNN did not have captioning from 12 pm to 1 pm even though it always has, and the TV Guide said it would be captioned.

Please send a copy of your complaint to DHHCAN (Jerald Jordan) at this mailing address, 826 Locust Drive, West River, MD 20778 or fax it to (410) 867-6429.

4. What to Do After Sending the Complaint If you do not have a satisfactory response in 45 days, contact the FCC with a copy of the written complaint that you sent to the TV distributor. Include a copy of their distributor's response, if any.

Send both letters to the FCC at 445 12th Street S.W., Washington, DC 20554, Attn. CICD/CGB.

Visual Presentation of Emergency Information Visual presentation of emergency information is required of broadcast, cable, and satellite TV providers. This is covered under a different regulation, and you can send complaints directly to the FCC.

Emergency information is defined as any information that is intended to protect life, health, safety or property.

Some examples of things that qualify as an emergency are:

- Dangerous weather -- hurricane, tornado, flood, earthquake, tidal wave, icing conditions, heavy snow, widespread fire, warning and watch of impending change in weather
- Dangerous situations -- widespread power failure, discharge of toxic gas, industrial explosion, civil disorder, school closing, changes in school bus schedules resulting from conditions.

Information that must be presented visually if it is provided audibly:

- Specific details about the areas that will be affected by the emergency
- Evacuation orders, detailed descriptions of areas to be evacuated, specific evacuation routes
- Approved shelters or how to take shelter in one's home
- Instructions on how to secure personal property
- Road closures
- How to obtain relief assistance

Note that this requires visual information but not necessarily captioning. Theoretically any effective means of providing all this information could be used, including holding up signs.

In advance, DHHCAN expresses its special gratitude for your interest and participation for full compliance with the FCC regulations on TV captioning.

About DHHCAN: DHHCAN, established in 1993, serves as the national coalition of organizations representing the interests of deaf and/or hard of hearing citizens in public policy and legislative issues relating to rights, quality of life, equal access, and self-representation. DHHCAN also provides a forum for proactive discussion on issues of importance and movement toward universal, barrier-free access with emphasis on quality, certification, and standards. Member organizations are: American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB), American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA), American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC), Association of Late-Deafened Adults (ALDA), The Caption Center at WGBH, Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD), Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD), Deaf Seniors of America (DSA), Gallaudet University, Gallaudet University Alumni Association (GUAA), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA), National Catholic Office of the Deaf (NCOD), Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) and USA Deaf Sports Federation (USADSF).

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